



October 12, 2001

Ms. Judith A. Hunter  
Paralegal  
City of Georgetown  
P.O. Box 409  
Georgetown, Texas 78627-0409

OR2001-4625

Dear Ms. Hunter:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 153259.

The City of Georgetown (the "city") received a request for "all e-mails and electronic faxes related to [city] businesses that have been sent or received by Mayor MaryEllen Kersch on her home computer . . . from May of 1999 to the present." You state that the city is releasing most of the responsive information, but claim that two responsive e-mails are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.107 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup> We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.107(1) excepts information that an attorney cannot disclose because of a duty to his client. In Open Records Decision No. 574 (1990), this office concluded that section 552.107 excepts from public disclosure only "privileged information," that is, information that reflects either confidential communications from the client to the attorney or the attorney's legal advice or opinions; it does not apply to all client information held by a governmental body's attorney. Open Records Decision No. 574 at 5 (1990). Section 552.107(1) does not except purely factual information from disclosure. *Id.*

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<sup>1</sup>Although you argue that information is protected under the attorney-client privilege pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code, which excepts "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision," the attorney-client privilege is recognized under section 552.107. Thus, we address your attorney-client privilege argument under section 552.107.

Section 552.107(1) does not except from disclosure factual recounting of events or the documentation of calls made, meetings attended, and memos sent. *Id.* at 5.

Upon review of the information you seek to withhold, we conclude that all of the information in Exhibits B and C falls within the attorney-client privilege, and therefore it may be withheld from disclosure in its entirety under section 552.107(1).

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.--Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or

complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the General Services Commission at 512/475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael A. Pearle".

Michael A. Pearle  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MAP/seg

Ref: ID# 153259

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Michael Sheffield  
300 Sequoia Spur  
Georgetown, Texas 78628  
(w/o enclosures)